What's in a Name?

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What's in a Name?

by theydonotmove

Summary

Inspired by tumblr user forlorn-kumquat's headcannon: "When Tony was born, his parents named him Steven Anthony Stark. Howard had his name legally changed when he decided that Tony wasn't worthy of the same name as Captain America. Tony hasn't told anyone, especially Steve."

Notes

Originally posted here: http://hawkeyesex.tumblr.com/post/108991105498/sad-headcanon-time-when-tony-was-born-his

See the end of the work for more notes

It wasn’t until years, years, after he met Steve that Tony told him his little secret. That his name was supposed to be something else, something he didn’t deserve.

Strung out on no sleep and a few too many scotches, a few too many failed experiments, and days on end in his lab, Tony finally collapsed into bed beside Steve.

"It won’t fucking work, Steve. It’s never fucking going to work. People need that pace maker and I can’t fucking pull my head out of my ass enough to make it."

Steve reached for the other man from his side of the bed. He pulled Tony into his arms.

“Shh, Tony. It’ll work. It’ll work because it’s you. And what is it you said? ‘When Tony Stark tells technology to work, technology says ‘how high?’” I remember because it didn’t make any sense then either.” He smiled fondly down at his Genius, but it quickly morphed into a look of concern when he noticed Tony was crying. "Tony, what’s —"

"People are dying, Steve, and I’m an idiot who can’t do his one damn job."

"You’re not —"

"And now I’m sitting here crying to you like a child instead of being remotely useful …"

"You need to sleep, Tony. You’re allowed to do that."

Tony kept on his rant like Steve had never spoken, “I should be doing something, something more. Dad was right, dad was right.”

Tony was shaking now, rocking back and forth a little, and he was breathing just a little too desperately for Steve’s liking. Steve had seen this before, but he never got any better at handling it.

He went for humour, “‘Dad was right?’ Who are you and what have you done with Tony?”

"Oh no, I’m definitely Tony. Do you know that wasn’t even my name until I was five years old? No. Dear old dad named me after you until he figured out I wasn’t worth it."

Tony very abruptly stopped talking.

Steve was staring at him in shock trying to process what he had just let slip.

Tony pulled away and sat on the far edge of the bed, hands on his knees.

"Tony …"

"Steven Anthony Stark," Tony said, slowly. "That’s the name on my birth certificate. Dad had it legally changed after I turned five. Didn’t rank very high on my IQ test, I guess. I think I told him I wanted to become a ballerina. That was the last straw. Next day, everybody was calling me Tony."

There was silence from behind him.

"I swore I'd never tell you that."

In an instant there were strong arms wrapped around him and the soft press of Steve's lips to his neck.

"You realize that's bullshit right?" Tony made a doubtful noise but Steve kept talking over him as he shifted to the floor and knelt in front of Tony. "That's such bullshit. Not to mention a shitty, shitty thing to do to a child. Tony, do you realize that I knew your father for less than a year? That in that time I was in the middle of a war, feeling the most power I had ever felt, and so fucking scared it would be taken away from me that I did as much as I could as quickly as I could just to be seen doing something? That it was sheer dumb luck half of it worked out? The man your father knew wasn't half the man you've become. And to compare a five year old to him is just plain abusive."

"Steve."

"And he was wrong Tony. So fucking wrong. I bet that iq test was words on a page wasn't it?"

"Yeah."

"And how complex was the lego tower you created instead of paying attention to it?"

"It was duplo. … And it had a working drawbridge."

"Exactly."

Tony was looking a least a little better now. His shakes had stopped and he managed a weak smile for this patient golden retriever of a man in front of him.
"Hold on." Steve stood up and crossed the room. The fact Tony's eyes followed his boxer clad ass as his did so showed that he was definitely doing better. "I was trying to plan this, but as I've been trying to explain - I'm not an infallible tactical genius."

"Just a regular old fallible tactical genius, then," Tony said, watching curiously as his boyfriend rooted through the pocket of the pair of jeans he had fold over a chair before bed.

Then, before he could blink, Steve was in front of him again, this time on just one knee.

Tony exhaled softly as Steve held up a box with a simple golden ring inside.

"Tony, I know it may be old-fashioned, but if you still want my name …"

He didn't get to finish. Tony tackled him to the floor with a kiss.

Tony went to sleep that night with a smile on his face and a ring on his left hand.

Steve watched him contently. It could take years, but he would convince this man, his future husband, that he didn't have to prove he was worthy of his name; and more importantly, that

his father’s name had never, ever, been worthy of him.

End Notes

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